

Building Records Collection from the Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives MS 15.5

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections

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Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biographical/Historical note</u>	4
<u>Scope and Contents note</u>	4
<u>Arrangement note</u>	5
<u>Administrative Information</u>	6
<u>Related Materials</u>	6
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	7
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	8
<u>Series I: Building Files, 1925-1939</u>	8
<u>Series II: Bound Volumes, 1930-1933</u>	13
<u>Series III: Additional Building Records, 1933-1945</u>	15

Summary Information

Repository	Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections
Title	Building Records Collection from the Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1928-1933
Date [inclusive]	1925-1945
Extent	3.3 Linear feet 3 banker's boxes
Language	English
Text [Box]	1-3
Abstract	This collection consists of administrative files dating from 1925-1945 (bulk 1928-1933) concerning the construction and furnishing of the Central Library building of the Enoch Pratt Free Library during Joseph L. Wheeler's tenure as Head Librarian/Director.

Preferred Citation note

Building Records Collection, 1925-1945. MS15.5, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, MD.

Biographical/Historical note

In early 1882, Enoch Pratt offered the gift of a central library as well as four branch libraries and an endowment of \$1,058,333.00 to the City of Baltimore. The City of Baltimore accepted and citizens showed their approval in a vote on October 25, 1882. Lewis H. Steiner was appointed as the first Librarian/Director of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in November 1884. On January 5, 1886, the Central Library was opened on Mulberry Street, with four more branches opening in the following three months. By 1894, the Pratt Library had established itself as a vital Baltimore institution with one of the largest book collections and highest circulation rates among public libraries in the United States.

In 1926, Joseph L. Wheeler was appointed Director and replaced Bernard C. Steiner, who had succeeded his father, Lewis H. Steiner. Wheeler oversaw many changes to the Pratt Library, including the construction of a new Central Library building that would accommodate the library's expanding collection. The new Central Library building was funded by a loan of \$3 million, which was approved by the citizens of Baltimore in an almost 3 to 1 margin vote. The old Central Library building was razed and construction on the new building began in 1931. The Pratt Library temporarily moved its operations to Redwood Street and Hopkins Place, where the First Mariner Arena now stands, from 1930 until the new Central Library building was completed in February 1933. The new building became a stunning example of a Beaux-Arts public library that was designed to be open, efficient and welcoming to patrons. In 1941, Wheeler co-authored *The American Public Library Building: Its Planning and Design* with Special Reference to Its Administration and Service with architect Morton Githens.

Scope and Contents note

The Building Records Collection from the Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives reflects the activities before, during, and after construction. It contains a wide range of materials such as correspondence, proposals, contracts, blue prints, plans, drawings, brochures, photographs, financial papers, and newspaper clippings. The materials appear to have been created during Joseph L. Wheeler's tenure as Director of the Pratt Library from 1926-1945.

Records created between 1928 and 1933 in the Building Files series make up the bulk of the collection. These records show the planning and construction phases of the new Central Library building. Files created before construction of the new Central Library building began in 1931, illustrate the amount of research and time Wheeler invested in planning for the construction. These files contain an abundance of correspondence from Wheeler to other libraries and librarians seeking advice and suggestions. There are also correspondence and promotional materials from contractors and vendors. After construction commenced in 1931, the records in the Building Files series track the changes, suggestions, and decisions made in regards to the building plans, furnishings, equipment, staff, funding, and other related subjects.

Items in Series II: Bound Volumes contain useful summative documents such as the Specifications, Proposal, Contract and Bond for the Construction and Furnishing of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Of note is an album of photographs taken shortly after the completion of the new Central Library building. Materials found in Series III: Additional Building Records reflect post construction activities such as specifications for moving from the temporary Central Library location to the new building and materials relating to the Open House conducted in Spring 1933.

Arrangement note

The Building Records Collection is arranged into the following series:

I. Building Files This series of Building Files represents the majority of the Building Records Collection. It appears that these files were compiled by chronologically arranging items that were deemed relevant to the construction and furnishing of the Central Library building of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Many items in this series bear handwritten text reading “Building” or “Bldg,” illustrating their designation to the Building Files. This series contains correspondence, financial papers, legal papers, clippings, photographic material, blue prints, drawings, and printed materials such as brochures from various vendors and contractors. Oversized items, mostly drawings and blueprints, have been removed and stored separately in Oversized Box 1. Folders which have had items removed will contain a notice of the removal.

II. Bound Volumes This series consists of bound volumes containing the Specifications, Proposal, Contract and Bond for the Construction of the Enoch Pratt Free Library as prepared by architects, Clyde N. Friz and Tilton & Githens, and consulting mechanical and structural engineers, Reeder, Esier & Akers and Henry Massart, for the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City. The Specifications, Proposal, Contract and Bond for the Construction of the Enoch Pratt Free Library was forwarded to and endorsed by the Department of Public Works and the Buildings Engineer at City Hall, Walter G. Hammond, in August 1930. After approval, the Board of Awards advertised the plans and specifications for bids. The series also contains the Specifications, Proposal, Contract and Bond for the furnishing of the Enoch Pratt Free Library including Drawings Showing the Furniture and Equipment. These were sent to the Department of Public Works and the Office of the Chief Engineer, Bernard L. Crozier, for approval in May 1932. Of note in this series is a bound volume of photographs taken after construction of the new Central Library building was completed. Prior to the renovation, a set of bound volumes were housed in the Board Room, and then transferred to the Special Collections stacks, aisle 15.

III. Additional Building Records This series contains records relating to the Central Library building of the Enoch Pratt Free Library that were not designated as part of the official Building Files in Series I. These records mostly reflect post construction building activities such as specifications for moving from the temporary Central Library to the new building and materials relating to the Open House in Spring 1933.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections

Revision Description

Entered into Archivist's Toolkit by Joan M. Wolk. December, 2016

Conditions Governing Access note

Unrestricted, by appointment

Conditions Governing Use note

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Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Related materials include other collections formed within the Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives:

Enoch Pratt Papers (Collection dates 1852-1896) Includes correspondence, ephemera and other items relating to the conception and creation of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. A number of Enoch Pratt's personal items are included. [Enoch Pratt - Ephemera - Oversize]

Lewis H. Steiner Papers (Collection Dates 1852-1896) The collection includes administrative papers and correspondence of the first librarian of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, which documents the daily operations and early decision making process of the institution . Bernard C. Steiner Papers (Collection Dates 1892-1926) The papers and correspondence of the second library director, who oversaw an expansion of the library and its services, including mail-in ready reference and the growth of Baltimore's system of branch libraries. [Bernard Steiner Ephemera - Oversize]

Branch Library Photograph Collection (Collection Dates 1900-) The photographs in this collection were gathered from the many branches of the library and date from 1900. Most branches have an advertisement page describing the activities of the local library, along with architectural photos.

Training Class Photographs (Collection Dates 1928-1944) The collection has 16 photographs of the library training classes, taken by The Hughes Company, Baltimore between 1928 and 1944. All members are identified by name.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Enoch Pratt Archives.
- Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Genre(s)

- Library fittings and supplies.

Geographic Name(s)

- Baltimore (Md.) -- Buildings, structures, etc.

Personal Name(s)

- Wheeler, Joseph Lewis, 1884-1970

Subject(s)

- Library architecture -- Maryland -- Baltimore.
- Library buildings -- Design and construction.
- Library buildings -- Maryland -- Baltimore.

Series I: Building Files, 1925-1939

Collection Inventory

Series I: Building Files, 1925-1939		Box 1-3
	Box	Folder
Letter from Bernard Steiner to Joseph Motley, June 1, 1925	1	1
Library Building Campaign - Campaign Leaflet and Related Correspondence, March-April 1927	1	2
Library Building Campaign – Correspondence to/from Joseph Wheeler, March-April 1927	1	3
Library Building Campaign – Correspondence to/from Morris Whitbridge, Library Trustee, March-April 1927	1	4
Library Building Campaign – Statements from Joseph Wheeler and Mayor Jackson, March-April 1927	1	5
Joseph Wheeler letters to/from other librarians and libraries, 1927	1	6
Library Buildings Roundtable (held at ALA Conference, Toronto, June 27, 1927) Correspondence to/from Joseph Wheeler, 1927	1	7
Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers	1	8
Library drawings, 1927-1928	1	9

Series I: Building Files, 1925-1939

Joseph Wheeler correspondence to/from Pratt library staff, January-June 1928	1	10
Joseph Wheeler correspondence to/from Pratt library staff, July-December 1928	1	11
Joseph Wheeler memoranda to trustees, May 1928	1	12
Correspondence regarding land to be used for library and legal issues, August 1928	1	13
Joseph Wheeler letters to/from other librarians and libraries, January-October 1928	1	14
Joseph Wheeler letters to/from other librarians and libraries, November-December 1928	1	15
Correspondence, sketches, and blueprints to/from Tilton & Githens, and Clyde Friz, architects, 1928*	1	16
Journal of the City Council of Baltimore, November-December 1928	1	17
Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers, January-June 1928	1	18
Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers, July-October 1928	1	19
Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers, November 1928	1	20

Series I: Building Files, 1925-1939

Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers, December 1928	1	21
Court of Appeals of Maryland documents/publications related to library property case, 1929	1	22
Joseph Wheeler correspondence to/from Pratt library staff, January 1929	1	23
Joseph Wheeler correspondence to/from Pratt library staff, January 1929 (continued)	1	24
Joseph Wheeler correspondence to/from Pratt library staff, February-December 1929	1	25
Joseph Wheeler letters to/from other librarians and libraries, January-March 1929	1	26
Joseph Wheeler letters to/from other librarians and libraries, June-December 1929	1	27
Joseph Wheeler letters to/from other librarians and libraries, June-December 1929 (continued)	1	28
Correspondence to/from Tilton & Githens, and Clyde Friz, architects, 1929	1	29
Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers, January-March 1929	1	30
Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers, April-June 1929	1	31

Series I: Building Files, 1925-1939

Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers, July-December 1929	1	32
Joseph Wheeler letters to/from other librarians and libraries, January 1930-	1	33
Correspondence to/from Tilton & Githens, and Clyde Friz, architects, 1930	1	34
Joseph Wheeler correspondence to/from Pratt library staff, January 1930-	1	35
Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers, January-February 1930*	1	36
Joseph Wheeler misc. correspondence and papers, March-April 1930	1	37
Building 2/7/30-4/23/30*	1	38
Building 4/9/30-5/9/30	1	39
Building 5/10/30-6/16/30	1	40
Building 6/16/30-8/1/30*	1	41
Building 8/4/30-12/3/30	1	42
Building 12/3/30-5/2/31*	1	43
Building 5/2/31-10/8/31	2	1

Series I: Building Files, 1925-1939

Plan and Elevations of Interior Finish of Local History Room	2	2
Building 10/9/31-12/10/31* Photographs of Planning Committee, 1930 by Holmes I. Mettee	2	3
Building 12/4/31-1/16/32*	2	4
Building 1/21/32-3/7/32	2	5
Building 3/7/32-3/23/32*	2	6
Building 3/2/32-5/4/32	2	7
Building 5/4/32-6/17/32*	2	8
Building 6/17/32-8/3/32	2	9
Building 8/3/32-9/19/32	2	10
Building 9/19/32-10/13/32*	2	11
Building 10/5/32-1/3/33	2	12
Building 10/29/32-11/15/32	2	13
Building 11/15/32-12/9/32*	2	14

Series II: Bound Volumes, 1930-1933

Building 12/9/32-12/31/32*	2	15
Building 12/29/32-2/6/33	2	16
Building 2/6/33-3/9/33	2	17
Building 3/9/33-6/12/33*	2	18
Building 6/8/33-12/4/33*	2	19
Building 12/4/33-2/23/35*	2	20
Building 3/11/35-5/24/37*	2	21
Building 5/27/37-12/12/39*	2	22
Series II: Bound Volumes, 1930-1933		Box 3
	Box	Folder
Specifications, Proposal, Contract, and Bond for the Construction of the Enoch Pratt Free Library Building, August 1930 (2 copies)	3	1
Specifications, Proposal, Contract, and Bond for the Furnishing of Furniture and Equipment for the Enoch Pratt Free Library, May 1932 (J. L. Wheeler's copy); (2 copies)	3	2
Specifications, Proposal, Contract, and Bond for the Furnishing of Furniture and Equipment for the Enoch Pratt Free Library, May 1932	3	3

Series II: Bound Volumes, 1930-1933

Specifications, Proposal, Contract, and Bond for the Furnishing of Furniture and Equipment for the Enoch Pratt Free Library, May 1932	3	4
Drawings Showing the Furniture and Equipment for the Enoch Pratt Free Library, May 1932	3	5
Drawings Showing the Furniture and Equipment for the Enoch Pratt Free Library, May 1932	3	6
		Room
Proceedings of Planning Service Committee of Building Owners and Managers Association, April 1930		Stacks/ Aisle 15
Steel Furniture Drawings Prepared by the General Fireproofing Company for the Library Part 1: Blueprints of preliminary drawings Part 2: Blue prints of final drawings October 1931-May 1932		Stacks/ Aisle 15
Preliminary Furniture Schedules and Blue Prints, December 1931		Stacks/ Aisle 15
Furniture Specifications: Typed Copy with Corrections, April-May 1932		Stacks/ Aisle 15
Drawings showing the Furniture and Equipment for The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City, May 1932		Stacks/ Aisle 15
Preliminary Furniture Drawings, 1931-1932		Stacks/ Aisle 15

Series III: Additional Building Records, 1933-1945

Preliminary Furniture Sketches Part 1: Layout and perspective sketches Part 2: Sketches of individual pieces, arranged approximately by item September 1931-February 1932	Stacks/ Aisle 15	
Furniture Specifications: Final Form Before Stenciling Part 1: Copy corrected by the Solicitor for the Chief Engineer Part 2: Key copy embodying these corrections from which stencils were made, June 1932	Stacks/ Aisle 15	
Preliminary Furniture Specifications Part 1: Preliminary location schedule by rooms with corrections by department heads Part 2: Schedule of furniture by rooms Part 3: General memoranda, notes and schedules Part 4: First rough draft of specifications, by items Part 5: Second draft of specifications, by items March-May 1932	Stacks/ Aisle 15	
Completed Furniture Drawings, from which Final Plano-Prints were made, 1931-1932	Stacks/ Aisle 15	
Official Photographs from Contractor, June 1931-February 1933	Stacks/ Aisle 15	
Special Photographs of Exterior and Interior. February-April 1933	Stacks/ Aisle 15	
Series III: Additional Building Records, 1933-1945	Box 3	Folder 7-10
	Box	Folder
Moving, Furniture, and Window Specifications, October-December 1932	3	7
Building Dedication and Opening, February-June 1933	3	8
Use of Building, 1934-1945	3	9

Series III: Additional Building Records, 1933-1945

Wheeler Articles	3	10
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